REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested. Claims 1-10 are pending in the application.

Claims 1-10 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being obvious over McConnell et al. in view of Bunton. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claims 1 and 6, the Examiner contends that McConnell et al. discloses "setting a circuit of a prescribed maximum link width to a selected one of a plurality of available link widths, to the selected active link width..." The Examiner has ignored language in claims 1 and 6. In particular, claim 1 recites "setting a multiplexer circuit, configured for selectively **switching** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width to a selected one of a plurality of available link widths, to the selected active link width" (emphasis added) and claim 6 recites "a multiplexer circuit configured for selectively **switching** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width to a selected one of a plurality of available link widths for transmission onto a transmit bus" (emphasis added).

Thus, each of the independent claims specifies the multiplexer circuit configured for "selectively ***switching*** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width". As described in the specification, the "switching" in the multiplexer of Figure 3 includes not only transfer of data, but transfer of the data according to the appropriate width. This is simply not disclosed or suggested in McConnell et al. There is no concept of prescribed maximum **link** width in the virtual **lane** disclosure of McConnell. The specification explicitly distinguishes between virtual lanes and link widths by specifying that the link width refers to the width of the actual width of the physical interface link (see also page 4, lines 4-11). As noted in Applicant's previous remarks and which the Examiner has yet to rebut, the claimed "link width" cannot be so broadly construed as to encompass the ***virtual lanes*** (VLs) of McConnell et al., because the claimed width is of a physical link.

Furthermore, the Examiner contends that the "Active Link Width ("LinkWidthActive" as disclosed in McConnell) is selected to either 1x, 4x, or 12x and that data packets 310 are

transmitted from the multiplexing means of Fig. 6 according to the set Active Link Width. However, the only mention of LinkWidthActive in McConnell is at column 10, lines 36-37 where McConnell discloses, "LinkWidthActive field is used to report the number of active lanes for the Port" (emphasis added). Reporting the number of active lanes is not a disclosure of setting a multiplexer circuit, configured for selectively **switching** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width to a selected one of a plurality of available link widths, to the selected active link width; receiving the frame data from an output buffer according to the prescribed maximum link width; and outputting the frame data from the multiplexer circuit to a transmit bus according to the selected active link width.

Since there is no multiplexer circuit in McConnell as admitted by the Examiner, there is no multiplexer circuit configured for "selectively ***switching*** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width. The Examiner contends that Bunton discloses a multiplexer circuit for selectively switching frame data and contends that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to "specify a multiplexer circuit as in Bunton for selective frame data switching within the circuit of McConnell." Applicant submits that one would not employ the multiplexers of Bunton used to reorder in individual lanes in a physical link in the virtual lane mechanism (Fig. 6) of McConnell.

Applicant further submits that even if the hypothetical combination of McConnell and Bunton was made, it would not result in the claimed subject matter. Bunton merely discloses multiplexers configured for transmitting a selected one of two input signals as necessary to change the order of the incoming signals in physical link (see Bunton, column 10, line 59 to column 11, line 2). Thus, if the multiplexers of Bunton were employed in McConnell, signals in McConnell would merely be selected to reorder incoming signals as taught by Bunton. This is not a suggestion of "selectively ***switching*** frame data of a prescribed maximum link width as claimed.

For these reasons, the §103 rejection should be withdrawn because the rejection fails to establish that the applied references disclose or suggest the claimed features. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1 and 6, and the claims that depend there-from, should be withdrawn

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including any missing or insufficient fees under 37 C.F.R. 1.17(a), to Deposit Account No. 50-0687, under Order No. 95-520, and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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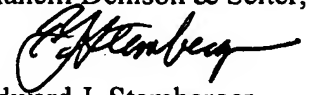

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